

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

and other Tuscan cities, converting sinners, enforcing reparation of fame and goods, healing feuds and factions. Pisa, too, gave them a glad welcome, and at length the Twelve, for very shame, revoked their sentence of banishment. Something of the mystical aroma of these days lingers yet in the letters of Giovanni and Francesco still preserved, and not the least pleasant feature in them is the beautiful and pathetic spiritual intercourse that still bound the former to his devoted wife, who, as she said, had prayed for rain, but had not quite expected such a flood.

A very different figure is Birgitta, whose revelation on the death of Clement VI we have already heard. Born about the year 1303, the daughter of Birger, lord of Finstad, and Ingeborge, his wife (both of whom were connected with the reigning house of Sweden), Birgitta, when little more than a child, was married to Ulf Gudmarsson, a Swedish noble of royal blood, to whom she bore eight children, of whom Charles, the eldest of her five sons, and Catherine, the second of three daughters, will play a part in this history. Her married life was (save for the enforced marriage of her eldest daughter to an unworthy man) one of almost ideal happiness. Alike in her husband's castle of Ulfasa and in the court of Magnus II, King of Sweden and Norway, she wrought for Christ and the salvation of souls. At her request, her confessor, Matthias of Linkoping, translated the Pentateuch into Swedish. On their return from a pilgrimage to Compostela, Ulf Gudmarsson became a monk, in 1343, and died in the following year, Birgitta being with him at the last.

Then the spirit of prophecy fell upon her, and the same mystical Voice spoke in the heart of the Swedish princess that the dyer's daughter of Siena was to hear a few years later.¹ The wonderful book of *Revelations*^ that Birgitta now began to dictate, is at once a spiritual autobiography, a collection of epistles, a record of graces and visions, a denunciation of the corruption of the times. It anticipates in many respects Catherine's political letters and her *Dialogue* alike. For a while, she returned to the court, as Mistress of the Palace, to preach repentance there ; a

¹ *Rtvclationes S. Sirgittae*, II. 10. 44